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THE LETTER BOX

257 SOUTH 4TH STREET,
PHILADELPHIA, PA., September 5, 1921.

EDITOR, ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

SIR: IN ADVOCATE OF PEACE for August, Charles F. Dole advances a "theory" concerning "justice," and the ADVOCATE promises "an article expressing an opposing theory," to appear in a subsequent issue. Our sympathies to the writer assigned to the production of the opposing article. When one sets out to demolish a "theory" founded upon history and common sense, his arguments only furnish additional demonstration of the soundness of the "theory" which was to have been demolished.

From countless generations of savage ancestors we inherit a so-called "business system" (still functioning along certain lines) which sets every man at his neighbor's throat. Under this system, other things equal, that man achieves the greatest "success" who bothers himself least about his neighbor's convenience and who devotes himself with the greatest singleness of purpose to the task of amassing for himself the greatest possible pile of things from whose enjoyment he may bar all others.

Of course, in the early stages of this dispensation, murder and rapine were rampant, and men early found it desirable to set up artificial conventions restricting the free play of the natural human propensities. The notion of "property" was set up and a screen of quasi-sacredness was thrown around human life. Compliance with such restrictions was dubbed "justice," and "justice" very naturally became a fetish with those who wished well to society. But the notion of "justice" can exist only in a community still but partially civilized.

Happily a new dispensation, snapping its fingers in the face of "justice," has come, and has come to stay. It is rapidly supplanting the ancient system, whose slogan is, "Buy cheap; sell dear"—supplanting it not in response to the preachings of humanitarians and theorists, but by virtue of the law of competition, and because it gives to the man on the street better service at vastly less cost.

For instance, the two million people of Philadelphia, acting as a unit, give not only to every citizen (however unworthy), but even to the strangers within our gates, unearned and to all alike, all the street facilities we can use, and not one of us can get any more of such facilities by seeking to overreach his neighbor. Hence the tendency to overreach, the tendency to perpetrate "injustice," has, to that extent, become atrophied by want of use.

Again, the State of Pennsylvania maintains a public-school system, of which every child is not only permitted, but encouraged (if not even forced), to take advantage, without money and without price.

The bachelor, with "no children to speak of," may complain of the "injustice" of taxing him for the education of the children of other people; but he can so complain only if he forgets that the few dollars which the father of a family may save in cost of tuition by sending his children to the public schools are negligible when compared with the vast benefit which bachelor and father alike enjoy in being permitted to live in a community furnished with even such schools as the State, in its present purblind condition, sees fit to supply.

The public-school system laughs the notion of "justice" to scorn. Are a child's parents too poor to buy schooling for him? Must they set him to work in a coal mine to eke out the pitiful family income?

"Justice" would insist that the family shall have such educational facilities as it can *earn, and no more*; but our "unjust" State says to the protesting millionaire, "Is thine eye evil because I am good? I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

So "unjust," indeed, have we unconsciously become under the civilizing influence of the modern business system that if it came to a choice we should insist that the *poor* man's child (rather than the millionaire's) should enjoy the State-provided school facilities, and *precisely because* its parents fail to earn the price. Can it be shown that the parents

have brought themselves to poverty by drink and idleness? So "unjust" are we that we regard this as an additional reason why the child should be plucked away from them and set at the educational breast of this "unjust" State.

"In a civilized community the terms 'justice' (with its twin, 'duty') and 'mercy' will be as meaningless as they would be in a happy family today.

And our civilization is being inevitably and rapidly accomplished by the irresistible push of universal demand—not any general and altruistic demand for a new order of society, but the selfish demand of each one of us for better service for himself, at lower cost.

An old hymn says:

"God moves in a *mysterious* way
His wonders to perform."

JOHN C. TRAUTWINE, JR.

THE MILWAUKEE LEADER,
MILWAUKEE, WIS., August 31, 1921.

EDITOR, ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

SIR: We would appreciate discovering how you would reconcile your editorial sentiments on the American attitude toward Hungary with the enclosed excerpts from the suave confession of Captain Gregory of his embezzlement, treachery, and generally unblushing exemplification toward Hungary of "the finest purpose of the best American intelligence and character."

Would it be impertinent to suggest that the ADVOCATE OF PEACE closely read *The Freeman* on the Bryce lectures and related topics before opening the floodgates of national self-glorification in foreign policy?

Yours, etc.,

CARL HAESSLER,
Exchange Editor.

BOOK REVIEWS

QUEEN VICTORIA. By *Lytton Strachey*. The *New Republic* edition. Harcourt, Bruce & Co., New York. Pp. 424; bibliography, 425-429; index, 431-434. Illustrations.

This is the sort of biography that lingers in the mind always. Reading it, one gathers into the memory pictures that time does not dim. Excellently written, having for its basis an apparent wealth of earnest research, the book yet is compact of that vivid quality that the newspapers sometimes achieve in what they call their human-interest stories. In this country, where the human-interest newspaper story about the great and the lowly is a national institution, every man's mind has a store of intimate pictures of the great—a store which he usually does not realize that he possesses. Strachey's book is a store of such pictures done with a skill that is rare, and all of them pictures of one of the most fascinating figures of the nineteenth century—a figure probably destined to loom forth in the chronicles to be written as does that of Elizabeth, when we look back upon old England. What is more, the pictures are offered in such reliable sequence that together they are an arresting record of the life and of the real nature of this remarkable woman.

Here is a picture of the meeting between George IV and the little seven-year-old Victoria: "The old rip, bewigged and gouty, ornate and enormous, with his jeweled mistress by his side and his flaunting court about him, received the tiny creature who was one day to hold in those same halls a very different state. 'Give me your little paw,' he said; and two ages touched. Next morning, driving in his phaeton with the Duchess of Gloucester, he met the Duchess of Kent and her child in the park. 'Pop her in,' were his orders, which to the terror of the mother and the delight of the daughter were immediately obeyed. Off they dashed to Virginia Water, where there was a great barge full of lords and ladies fishing, and another barge with a band; and the King ogled Feodora and praised her manners, and then turned to his own small niece. 'What is your favorite tune? The band shall play it.' 'God save the King, sir,' was the instant answer. The Princess' reply has been

praised as an early example of a tact which was afterwards famous. But she was a very truthful child, and perhaps it was her genuine opinion."

And this picture of her meeting with her cousin Albert, after she had insisted with deep sincerity that she cared not even to hear of the old project for their marriage, nor to hear of marriage at all: "Albert arrived, and the whole structure of her existence crumbled into nothingness, like a house of cards. He was beautiful; she gasped; she knew no more. Then in a flash a thousand mysteries were revealed to her; the past, the present, rushed upon her with a new significance; the delusions of years were abolished and an extraordinary, an irresistible, certitude leaped into being in the light of those blue eyes, the smile of that lovely mouth. The succeeding hours passed in a rapture. She was able to observe a few more details—the 'exquisite nose,' the 'delicate mustachios and slight, but very slight, whiskers,' the 'beautiful figure, broad in the shoulders and a fine waist.' She rode with him, danced with him, talked with him, and it was all perfection. She had no shadow of a doubt. He had come on a Thursday evening, and the following Sunday morning she told Lord Melbourne (to whom she previously had been pouring out her objections to marriage) that she had 'a good deal changed her opinion as to marrying.' Next morning she told him that she had made up her mind to marry Albert. The morning after that she sent for her cousin."

And these two pictures of her old age: "During her youth and middle age smoking had been forbidden in polite society, and so long as she lived she would not withdraw her anathema against it. Kings might protest; bishops and ambassadors, invited to Windsor, might be reduced, in the privacy of their bedrooms, to lie full length upon the floor and smoke up the chimney—the interdict continued. . . . In April, 1900, when she was in her eighty-first year, she made the extraordinary decision to abandon her annual visit to the south of France, and to go instead to Ireland, which had provided a particularly large number of recruits to the armies in the field (South African war). She stayed for three weeks in Dublin, driving through the streets, in spite of the warnings of her advisers, without an armed escort; and the visit was a complete success."

There is more in this life of Queen Victoria, of course, then graphic pen pictures of the woman and queen. The movement of her time is outlined. But what makes the book valuable is not that outline, to be found in so many volumes, but the pictures, for they are a delight in themselves and at the same time they invest some of the events of the Victorian era with a vitality and spirit.

THE MIRRORS OF WASHINGTON. Anonymous. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. 1921. Pp. I-XI, 1-256. Fourteen cartoons by Cesare and fourteen portraits.

It is one thing to take pen in hand and write what one thinks of the notables of the land, freely and directly; it is another thing to note the success of the effort and to determine to duplicate it. For in the first case the probabilities tend to simplicity, accuracy, and lack of self-consciousness; and in the second case the probabilities tend to striving for effect, and to the seeking of the thing that, put into words, will start tongues wagging. This fact marks the great difference between the *Mirrors of Downing Street* and the later book which has attracted such wide attention, *The Mirrors of Washington*. Without meaning to be harsh, it must be said that the author of the latter book often seems to have been more intent upon being clever and novel than upon painting a picture.

The best mirror, the most faithful mirror, is that of President Harding. It may not be a faithful mirror a year hence, or even today. The sketch was written some months ago, soon after Mr. Harding entered the White House, and it pictures him as he was then and he had been previously. There will be those who will make the sound point that in the first year of incumbency of the presidency a man may change mightily; or rather, that he will change mightily in the visible qualities, under the pressure of incalculable responsibility. So, the mirror of Mr. Harding may be taken with some reservations, but as a portrayal of the old Harding it is excellent. It reveals him as an honest, kindly man, not

given to producing new ideas, and not overly receptive of new ideas from others; a man accustomed to traveling the easy road of the standardized and conventionalized; a man reflecting in his views of life and his values of life the very comfortable atmosphere of the prosperous town in the prosperous Ohio Valley in which Mr. Harding has spent his life. That may be accepted for the time being.

In the sketch of Mr. Wilson, the author used a trick mirror. The merit of the Wilson article is its novelty. Looking into the mirror that he held up before Mr. Wilson's austere Scotch Presbyterian personality, we see something that we never have noticed before in all the mass of critical estimates of the man. It is, in a word, a coward. The man whose favorite form of fighting, as most of us have understood, was the pitched battle is a coward. The hypothesis for the argument is that Mr. Wilson, after a short experience, abandoned the rough and tumble of practice of the law to become a teacher. He dreaded the rough contacts of life, we are informed. The average man's acquaintance, we fancy, will quickly bring to mind a number of men of his personal acquaintance who quit the law for reasons that have no resemblance at all to cowardice. But apart from that, the discerning are likely to see Mr. Wilson's abandonment of the law another manifestation of unwillingness to work with others on the plane of equality, and perhaps of his hatred of compromises, for the most successful practitioner of the law today is more or less a skilled compromiser?

Possibly, in a mood of poetic justice, the author of the *Mirrors of Washington* also uses a trick mirror in dealing with Mr. Wilson's arch-enemy, Senator Lodge. He is "the scholar in politics" become a sort of charnel house, through constant subversion of the higher standards to considerations of partisan nature, or to low sectional and personal hatreds. It is rather strange that among those who know Senator Lodge and who, generally, realize and deprecate his tendencies to extreme partisanship and to spleen, it has not been discovered that the worth of the man and the statesman still is sufficient to overcome these defects. A man of the character painted in the *Mirrors of Washington* would hardly enjoy, we believe, the personal esteem in which Senator Lodge is held by the large majority of those who know him well.

In the Root sketch, quite inadequate, the trick mirror was used less often, and in that of Bernard M. Baruch it is not used at all. As in the Harding article, the effort seems to have been primarily to portray the subject, and the result adds to the regret one feels after reading such articles as those on Mr. Wilson and Senator Lodge. One regrets that the author did not keep his eye on each of his subjects instead of allowing it to wander at times to the crowd and its taste for blood. For the Baruch article confirms the impression gained from the Harding article that the book could have been much more meritorious. No more brilliant and penetrating portrait of a public man has been written in recent times than that of Bernard M. Baruch in the *Mirrors of Washington*. To read it is to know the man.

The impression is gathered as one passes toward the middle of the book and on to the end that the author grew weary or was in haste to get his production in print. The Harvey article is inadequate; the House and Hughes articles only fairly good; the somewhat acidous Hoover article but a little better than the average critical study of the man, and those on Borah, Penrose, Johnson, and Lansing rather ordinary. That on Senator Knox is somewhat better than the general run of those of the lesser celebrities. This interesting book savors a little too much of the "smart elect" to satisfy as it might have been made to do.

THE ISOLATION PLAN (non-intercourse), with Annexes on the Covenant. By William H. Blymer. Pp. I-XXVI, 1-146. Preface; index. The Cornhill Publishing Co., Boston. \$2.

This is a new edition of the work issued in 1917, dealing with the plan for general disarmament of the nations and compulsory arbitration with those nations that refuse to conform subjected to the penalty of non-intercourse by all the other nations. Mr. Blymer states with vigor the faults as he sees them in the League covenant.